



Bureau of Epidemiology and Disease Control Services
Office of the Bureau Chief
Public Information Office
3815 North Black Canyon Highway
Phoenix, Arizona 85015-5351

JANE DEE HULL, GOVERNOR
CATHERINE R. EDEN, DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Courtney Casillas, ADHS Public Information: (602) 230-5901
Sharon Sass, ADHS Office of Nutrition Services: (602) 542-2826
Laura Devany, Maricopa County Environmental Services: (602) 506-6611

Health and Safety Tips for a Happy Halloween

To prevent Halloween from turning into a hair-raising event for parents, the Arizona Department of Health Services and Maricopa County Environmental Services are offering some simple advice to keep accidents and injuries, as well as stomachaches and cavities, from haunting trick-or-treaters.

Moderation is Key: Halloween needn't be a nutritional nightmare. Feed children a balanced dinner or healthy snack before they leave home so they won't be tempted to eat from their treat bags while they're out. Also, don't let them consume all their candy in one night. Instead, have them store their loot in a decorative container and space treats out over several weeks.

Treat Safety: Supervise children to ensure they do not eat any treats, particularly unwrapped treats, until an adult has carefully examined them for evidence of tampering. Only wrapped, named candy should be consumed. If the candy is not wrapped or appears questionable, throw it out. Supervise young children to make sure they don't choke while eating candy.

Alternatives to Candy: Fill trick-or-treaters' Halloween pails, bags and pillowcases with stickers, plastic spider rings, and Halloween pencil toppers. Other items children enjoy include: trading cards, plastic animals, whistles, plastic pinball and maze games and charms. However, parents should carefully sort through treats collected by small children and remove items that may be choking hazards.

Choosing Safe Houses: Children should only visit homes where the residents are known and have outside lights on as a sign of welcome. Always accompany children into a home or apartment.

- Throw neighborhood parties as an alternative to trick or treating in unknown areas.

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Halloween Tips (contd.)

- People expecting trick-or-treaters should remove anything that could be an obstacle from lawns, steps and porches. Candle-lit jack-o'-lanterns should be kept away from landings and doorsteps where costumes could brush against the flame. Indoor jack-o'-lanterns should be kept away from curtains, decorations and other furnishings that could catch fire.

Pedestrian Safety: Young children always should be accompanied by an older, responsible person.

- Encourage children to walk, not run, from house to house and to use the sidewalk instead of the street.
- Caution children against running out from between parked cars and across lawns where ornaments, hoses and sprinklers present dangers.
- For greater visibility, carry a flashlight and decorate costumes and candy bags with reflective tape that will glow in the beam of a car's headlight. Reflective tape is available in hardware, bicycle and sporting goods stores.

Flame Resistant Costumes: Only purchase costumes, masks, beards and wigs which are identified on the label as "flame resistant." Although "flame resistant" does not mean these items won't catch fire, it does indicate the items will resist burning and should extinguish quickly. To minimize contact with candles and other fire sources, avoid costumes made with flimsy materials and outfits with big, baggy sleeves or billowing skirts.

Costume Designs: Purchase or make costumes that are light and bright enough to be clearly visible to motorists.

- Halloween cosmetics and hair spray should be applied according to the instructions on the label. Hair coloring sprays can be irritating to some individuals and should be tested before use on a small patch of skin.
- Costumes should be short enough to prevent children from tripping or falling. Hats and scarves should be tied securely to prevent them from slipping over children's eyes.
- Use make-up instead of masks. Loose-fitting masks might obscure a child's vision or obstruct breathing. If a mask is used, make sure it fits securely and has eyeholes big enough to allow full vision.
- Accessories such as swords and knives should be made of soft, flexible material.

Pet Safety: For the safety of both children and pets, keep animals confined indoors or in a fenced yard during trick-or-treating hours.

- Don't leave burning candles where they could be knocked over by your pet.
- Keep candy out of pets' reach. Candy can be hazardous to your pet's health -- even a small amount of chocolate can make your dog very sick.